Traffic Safety Culture Transportation Pooled Fund Outreach Materials

Final Report

Prepared by

Kelly Green, MPA, Kari Finley, PhD, Bridget Hanson, PhD, and Samantha Pinzl, MPH

Center for Health and Safety Culture

Montana State University

Prepared for the

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE TRANSPORTATION POOLED FUND STUDY #TPF-5(547)

May 2026

TECHNICAL REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report No. FHWA/MT-26-02-8882-547-28	**2. Government Accession No.**	**3. Recipient's Catalog No.**
4. Title and Subtitle Traffic Safety Culture Transportation Pooled Fund Outreach Materials	**5. Report Date** May 2026 **6. Performing Organization Code**	
7. Author(s) Kelly Green, MPA (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6846-0447), Kari Finley, PhD (http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0887-4939), Bridget Hanson, PhD (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8441-8601), Samantha Pinzl, MPH	**8. Performing Organization Report No.**	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Center for Health and Safety Culture Montana State University P.O. Box 170548 Bozeman, MT 59717-0548	**10. Work Unit No.** **11. Contract or Grant No.** 8882-547-28	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Research Programs Montana Department of Transportation (SPR) 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001 Other sponsoring agencies: Alaska DOT, Connecticut DOT, Georgia DOT, Idaho Transportation Department, Illinois DOT, Iowa DOT, Kansas DOT, Kentucky DOT, Louisiana DOT and Development, Michigan DOT, Minnesota DOT, Mississippi DOT, Nevada DOT, Texas DOT, Utah DOT, Vermont Agency of Transportation, and West Virgina DOT	**13. Type of Report and Period Covered** Final Report (November 2025-May 2026) **14. Sponsoring Agency Code** 5401	

15. Supplementary Notes:

Conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. This report can be found at https://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/trafficsafety.shtml.

Recommended citation: Green, K., Finley, K., Hanson, B.L., & Pinzl, S. (2026). *Traffic safety culture transportation pooled fund outreach materials* (Report No. 26-02-8882-547-28). Montana Department of Transportation and Center for Health and Safety Culture. https://doi.org/10.21949/1529574

16. Abstract

This project supported the Traffic Safety Culture Transportation Pooled Fund (TSC-TPF) by developing outreach materials and a communication plan to improve the dissemination and use of research findings. Using the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project as a pilot, the project team created a concise project summary, audience-specific speaking points, and templates to support consistent development of similar materials for future TSC-TPF projects. Feedback from Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members informed revisions to improve clarity, accessibility, and usability of the materials. A communication plan was also developed to provide TAC members with structured, actionable options for promoting project resources through commonly used channels. Collectively, these products enhance the ability of TAC members to promote adoption of project resources and strengthen research-to-practice efforts.

17. Key Words Project summary, speaking points, outreach, communication plan		**18. Distribution Statement** No restrictions. This document is available through the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 21161.	
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified	**20. Security Classif. (of this page)** Unclassified	**21. No. of Pages** 23	**22. Price**

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Acknowledgments

The authors appreciate the support and contributions from the members of the Transportation Pooled Fund on Traffic Safety Culture. Graphics and layout were completed by Stacey Utterback.

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Acronyms

DOTs	Departments of Transportation
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TSC-TPF	Traffic Safety Culture Transportation Pooled Fund

1 Introduction

The goal of this project was to develop additional outreach materials for the recently completed project *Improving Pedestrian Safety*, as well as create templates and a communication plan to support future research projects for the Traffic Safety Culture Transportation Pooled Fund (TSC-TPF).

1.1 Background

During the June 2025 in-person meeting of the TSC-TPF, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members expressed a need for additional outreach materials, including speaking points and a concise 1–2-page overview for the recently completed *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project. The TAC also identified the need for templates that could support future research projects and a communication plan to effectively promote TSC-TPF resources. These materials will help members to confidently share and promote these tools and resources with leadership, colleagues across divisions and departments, traffic safety partners, and elected officials to expand adoption and maximize impact.

2 Task 1a: Develop and Finalize Additional Outreach Materials

The goal of Task 1a was to develop and finalize the additional outreach materials requested by the TAC members for the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project. The *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project was selected as the focus project for these outreach materials because the project had recently been completed, TAC members spent time discussing the project's toolkit during the June 2025 annual TSC-TPF meeting, and TAC members were interested in promoting the project and what was learned. They identified a need for a summary document and speaking points to promote the use of the toolkit and the benefits of the research project. In addition to the project summary and speaking points, TAC members requested templates that could be used by the researchers to develop these outreach materials for future TSC-TPF research projects.

In preparation to create the outreach materials, we reviewed the existing tools and resources as well as the final report and toolkit for the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project. These materials were used to create a high-level overview, identify key findings, and capture key messages to be included in the project summary and speaking points.

We also reviewed project summary documents from other transportation agencies and research centers to help inform the development of the project summary and speaking points. Further, the principal investigator conducted a brief literature review specifically focused on guidance documents and final reports from the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) and the Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program that focused on translating research to practice or sharing research findings. Technical briefs and/or executive summaries were identified as a key technology transfer opportunity in the *Guide to Implementing Technology Transfer* guide produced for NCHRP (Hirt et al., 2023) and are utilized by many departments of transportation (DOTs) to inform multiple audiences about research projects. Some of the key elements identified in this guide to be considered in dissemination strategies include impact, audience, relevance, appeal, and resources. Findings from the review were used to inform the development of outlines for the project summary and speaking points as well as the layout and graphics for the materials.

Purpose statements for both the project summary and speaking points were created to clarify the intent and help us to maintain a clear focus for these outreach materials. The purpose of the project summary is to provide members with a quick, digestible overview of the project that includes why the project matters, the approach used, results, and

recommendations. This resource can be shared broadly with individuals who are not a part of the TSC-TPF and can serve as a brief or executive summary for the final report with the ultimate goal of promoting a project's resources and recommendations.

The purpose of the speaking points is to provide TAC members with clear discrete statements they can use in communication with various audiences. The goals for each audience may be unique and could include cultivating conversations about the TSC-TPF's research, conveying key benefits of the research, fostering collaboration and partnership, and/or promoting utilization of the project's resources. The choice of audience will be determined based on the project and resources developed for the project. The audiences could include agency leadership, partner agencies, community stakeholders, elected officials, and law enforcement.

In conversations with the TAC members to identify specific audiences for the speaking points, they expressed a need for speaking points for multiple agencies about the project resources and speaking points for leadership to promote the work the TSC-TPF is doing and to convey the benefits of that work. These conversations helped inform the specific audiences for the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project. CHSC created speaking points for agency leadership, internal active transportation office or coordinators, and agency partners.

2.1 Pilot Testing *Improving Pedestrian Safety* Outreach Materials

After drafting the project summary and speaking points, a few TAC members were contacted via email and asked to provide feedback on the project summary and to pilot test the speaking points with one of the specific audiences selected. In response to this request, limited initial feedback was received. Therefore, the request was expanded to include all TAC members, and the deadline was extended to allow additional time for input. The following instructions and questions were provided to the TAC members for pilot testing the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project summary and speaking points.

Improving Pedestrian Safety Project Summary

The purpose of the project summary is a high-level summary of the research project. Please review and answer the following questions:

1. Overall, how clear and understandable did you find the summary?
2. Was the level of detail appropriate for a summary document?
3. Were any parts confusing, unclear, or unnecessary? If so, which ones?
4. Was it helpful? Was it useful?
5. How do you see yourself using this document?

6. Is there anything important missing?

Improving Pedestrian Safety Speaking Points

Audiences: DOT Leadership, Partner Agencies, or Internal Active Transportation Coordinator/Office

Instructions:

Purpose of speaking points is specific to the audience they are intended for and may include cultivating conversations about the Traffic Safety Culture Pooled Fund's research, convey key benefits of the research to leadership/agencies, and promote utilization of the project's tools and resources.

- Choose someone to have a conversation with and use the speaking points to engage in that conversation.
- Review the speaking points, make notes about any changes you want to implement to tailor to the person you plan on speaking to. These are just starting points; use what you know about the individual you are speaking with to customize the language.
    - Before the conversation, remind yourself of the goal of this communication. For example, I want my leadership to understand the benefits of the TSC PF research, identify ways they can help lead change, and encourage the DOT to utilize the toolkit.
- Take notes of questions that come up and reactions from the person you are speaking with.

After the conversation, please relay the following information to Kelly at CHSC:

1. Who/what role did you communicate with?
2. What method of communication (e.g., in-person in a formal meeting, informal hallway chat, telephone, etc.)?
3. Did you share information from the speaking points? Which ones?
4. Did you find the speaking points to be helpful? If not, what additional information did you need to be included?
5. How did it go for you? How comfortable were you with the conversation?
6. What feedback, reactions, and questions did the person you were speaking with have?

7. Any other feedback you would like to include?

2.1.1 Feedback from the TAC

Overall, the feedback on the project summary and speaking points was positive. TAC members found the layout of the project summary visually appealing and easy to understand, and they appreciated the brief overview. Some TAC members suggested making the language more accessible and reducing content. One TAC member questioned if there was a place to share local or state data.

Although TAC members did not pilot test the speaking points, they provided overall feedback on the options. Most TAC members responded positively and thought the speaking points would be helpful when discussing the project. Suggestions included broadening the intended audiences to ensure that they could be used with different partner agencies, reducing duplication, and combining the three versions into a single document.

Overall, TAC members expressed a desire to leave behind materials with whomever they were communicating with and there was uncertainty about whether they would prefer to leave the project summary or the speaking points.

TAC member feedback also informed the development of the communication plan which is discussed in more detail in Section 3 of this report (Task 1b: Develop and Finalize Communication Plan).

2.1.2 Revisions

We reviewed all TAC member feedback and made changes to address concerns and, where applicable, incorporate suggested edits. Microsoft Copilot was used to adjust the reading levels of both the project summary and speaking points to make the language more accessible. All the suggested changes from Copilot were reviewed and incorporated only if the suggested changes made sense and did not change the underlying meaning of the content.

Further, the feedback from TAC members suggested that the purpose of the various outreach materials needed to be more clearly articulated. The project summary is a document that is intended to be shared beyond the TAC members. It is a high-level overview and can be disseminated to others to promote the use of the toolkit. A QR code and clickable link were added to ensure the project resources could be accessed easily and quickly.

The speaking points are intended for TAC members and not meant to be shared with others. A purpose statement was added to the speaking points to make this clear. As suggested by the TAC members, the audiences were expanded and the number of

speaking points for the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project was reduced from three to two, one for leaders and one for staff and partners. Fillable bullet points were added to the speaking points to allow the TAC members to incorporate state or local data and generate personalized next steps.

The *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project summary and speaking points were finalized based on the feedback and provided to the TAC members for review. The final project summary and speaking points will be available at https://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/trafficsafety-ips.aspx.

2.2 Templates for Future TSC-TPF Projects

After finalizing materials for *Improving Pedestrian Safety*, templates for the project summary and speaking points were created. The templates are black and white, maintain the graphic layout of the documents, and provide instructions for what to include in each section of the document. These templates are intended for researchers to use for future TSC-TPF projects and will not be distributed. Project summaries and speaking points will be developed using these templates for all future TSC-TPF projects. The templates were provided to the TAC members for review.

3 Task 1b: Develop and Finalize Communication Plan

The goal of Task 1b was to develop and finalize a communication plan for the TAC to promote the resources and tools developed as part of the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project. To inform the plan, we analyzed TSC-TPF quarterly meeting notes from 2020-2025 to understand how TAC members and their organizations currently disseminate information and research. Common distribution channels included email, listservs, subcommittee sharing, internal leadership briefings, presentations to legislative committees, webinars, briefs, website postings, and coordination with partner agencies to promote resources. We also reviewed existing communication plans from participating DOTs and relevant literature from NCHRP. These sources reinforced the use of similar channels while adding structure to the planning process. The plans identified audience, key messages to reach those audiences, methods to reach those audiences (e.g., email, project websites, social media, public meetings and community events, videos, print publications and message boards), budget, timelines, and roles. The *Guide for Implementing Technology Transfer* (Hirt et al., 2023) identifies similar components for developing a communication plan and highlights many of the same distribution channels that TAC members use. Based on this research, a communication plan template for TSC-TPF projects was created.

An initial outline for the communication plan was created and used to draft a communication plan for the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project, prioritizing the most relevant and actionable resources for TAC members. The goal of the plan is to provide a variety of options for TAC members to promote the *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project. The plan emphasizes clearly communicating why pedestrian safety matters, how the toolkit and project resources can support practitioners' work, and a clear call to action.

The draft communication plan was converted to a user-friendly checklist using ChatGPT to restructure the content. The resulting checklist was carefully reviewed by the project team to ensure accuracy and alignment with the original content. The checklist was further refined based on feedback received during pilot testing of the project summary and speaking points, as well as insights from the initial research conducted on communication plans.

The final *Improving Pedestrian Safety* Communication Plan was submitted to the TAC members for review and is included in Appendix A.

4 Conclusion

This project addressed the TSC-TPF TAC's request for practical, user-friendly outreach materials to support the dissemination and utilization of research findings. Using the recently completed *Improving Pedestrian Safety* project as a pilot, we developed and finalized a project summary, speaking points for leaders and partner agencies, templates, and a communication plan. These materials will provide the TAC with clear, consistent tools to promote the value of the TSC-TPF's research and increase utilization of project resources. The following materials can be found at https://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/trafficsafety-ips.aspx.

- Improving Pedestrian Safety Project Summary
- Improving Pedestrian Safety Speaking Points for Leaders
- Improving Pedestrian Safety Speaking Points for Staff and Partners
- Improving Pedestrian Safety Communication Plan

These materials enhance the TSC-TPF's capacity to translate research into practice and support continued engagement among members.

5 References

Hirt, B., Kline, C., Johnson, K., & Capers, H. (2023). *Guide for implementing technology transfer* (Guide NCHRP 20-44(28)). National Cooperative Highway Research Program. https://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP20-44(28)GuideforTechTransfer.pdf

Appendix A

Improving Pedestrian Safety Communication Plan

The Improving Pedestrian Safety Communication Plan helps ensure that the resources of the Traffic Safety Culture Transportation Pooled Fund reach the people who can benefit from them most. It can help organize outreach efforts and make it easier to share the resources broadly. The plan can also be used to capture research promotion activities to share during quarterly meetings.

This communication plan includes examples of ways the project's resources can be promoted over the next 12 months. Consider these as a menu of ideas rather than a comprehensive list. A blank template is also included for adding additional outreach ideas or building your own personalized plan.

Review before you promote

Take a few minutes to review:

- Project summary
- Toolkit
- Audience-specific speaking points

Important: Review **page 8 of the toolkit** to see how different stakeholders can use the tools. This will help you quickly connect the resources to your audience's role and priorities.

Promote (see examples starting on page 2)

- Clearly communicate:
  - Why pedestrian safety matters (use relevant state or local data when possible)
  - How the toolkit and project resources can support their work
  - A call to action (ideas are listed in the speaking points documents)
- Provide access (printed or digital) to the relevant project resources:
  - Toolkit
  - Project Summary
  - Webinar
- Include next steps if applicable, record outcomes, and follow up

Over the next 3 months, you might…

☐ Share the project resources with staff within your organization

- Some of you may already have an established procedure for sharing resources and tools and often that work can be assisted by your communications office. They may already have mechanisms like a website, listserv, or intranet to share resources with internal staff.
    - Email the communication office the link to the project summary, project website, and toolkit and ask for their advice on how best to share this information with internal staff at the DOT
    - Date sent: _____
- If you do not have a communication office, email the project summary, project website, and toolkit to internal staff at your organization who are involved with pedestrian safety with a brief explanation of how the resources can be used.
    - Date sent: _____
- Outcomes/notes:

☐ Share the project resources with pedestrian safety coordinators or bicycle & pedestrian programs/groups (or other active transportation staff)

- Email the project summary, webinar, and toolkit with a brief explanation of how they can be used
    - Encourage coordinators to review the materials and share with peers/colleagues who are also engaged in improving pedestrian safety
    - Date sent: _____
- Outcomes/notes:

☐ Share the toolkit with public health organizations in your state

- Send a short email highlighting how the toolkit supports the implementation of pedestrian safety strategies
    - Offer to answer questions or provide a short overview
    - Date sent: _____
- Outcomes/notes:

☐ Present to DOT partners and/or public health organizations

- Offer to provide a short presentation
  - _____
  - _____
- Reinforce the shared responsibility for pedestrian safety and frame this as an opportunity to share resources and grow a partnership between your organizations
- Revise and customize the final PowerPoint (available from CHSC upon request) or create your own to:
  - Summarize the project and findings
  - Review the toolkit
  - Provide the QR code to the project website for access to the resources
- Outcomes/notes:

Over the next 6 months, you might…

☐ Share resources with city and county public works staff and relevant local private firms (e.g., engineers and planners)

- Email the project summary, webinar, and toolkit with a brief explanation of each
  - Encourage recipients to watch the webinar to learn about project results and tools developed
  - Highlight how resources can be applied in project design and planning
  - Encourage engineers and planners to share the materials with their peers and colleagues
  - Date sent: _____
- Outcomes/notes:

☐ Meet with a pedestrian advocate (or advocacy organization)

- Share the project summary and toolkit
- Emphasize that the tools are designed to help leaders and stakeholders across disciplines prioritize safety for all road users
- Discuss opportunities for partnership and inquire about other advocates to connect with
  - _____
- Outcomes/notes:

☐ Meet with planning organizations (e.g., RPOs, MPOs, counties, smaller agencies)

- Aim to complete at least two meetings
  - _____
  - _____
- Bring printed copies of the project summary and toolkit
- Emphasize the toolkit is designed to support their work and is adaptable to their organization
- Outcomes/notes:

Over the next 12 months, you might…

☐ Meet with your DOT leadership

- Aim to complete at least two meetings
  - _____
  - _____
- Bring printed copies of the project summary and toolkit
- Emphasize transportation agencies are uniquely positioned to lead pedestrian safety efforts and tools are designed to help leaders prioritize safety for all road uses
- Outcomes/notes:

☐Check in with a pedestrian advocate (or advocacy organization)

- Reconnect with pedestrian advocates you have already engaged (e.g., phone call, email, grab a coffee)
- Ask how they have used or promoted the resources
- Discuss opportunities for partnership and inquire about other advocates to connect with
  - _____
- Outcomes/notes:

☐ Check in with partner agencies (e.g. public health, public works, planning organizations) and internal DOT staff

- Reconnect with partner organizations and internal DOT staff you have already engaged (e.g., phone call, email, grab a coffee)
- Ask how they have used or promoted the resources
- Discuss opportunities for partnership and inquire about other agencies to connect with
    - _____
- Outcomes/notes:

Blank Communication Plan Template (Optional)

You can use this template to build your own customized outreach plan.

Audience:

Resources to Share:

Key Messages to include in communications:

-
-
-

Activity (e.g., distribution of project webinar and toolkit, meet with DOT leadership to share project summary and toolkit):

Dissemination Method (e.g., email, meeting, presentation):

Date Completed (recommend setting a goal for when to complete this task):

Outcomes/Notes:

E.g., Coordinator expressed gratitude for the resources and said he will watch the webinar and forward to others.

Received reply